Infant Toddler Developmental Standards Work Group
Friday, April 29, 2011
Meeting Notes

In attendance in Chicago:

Jeanna Capito (co-chair)	Rebecca Klein	Rebecca Waterstone
Karen Yarbrough (co-chair)	Gregory O'Donnell	Candace Williams
Sam Aigner-Treworgy (staffer)	Sue Reynolds	Casey Winke Amayun
Susan Miller (consultant)	Jessica Roberts	
Sharonda Brown	Sara Rolen	
Lindsay Cochrane	Sharifa Townsend	
Theresa Hawley	Melissa Veljasevic	

Via Phone:

Anita Berry	Lauri Morrison-Frichtl	Vikki Thompson
Elva DeLuna	Kate Ritter	Marcia Townsend
Mary Jane Forney	Barb Terhall	
Joanne Kelly	Dawn Thomas	

I: Welcome and Introductions

Co-chairs welcomed the group, with introductions of those in the room and participating by phone. Before moving on to the business of the day, Karen reviewed two things happening at the state and federal level that have the potential of supporting the work of the group: 1) *Kindergarten Readiness Assessment* report, to be issued publicly later in the week (copies will be sent electronically to the Work Group), focuses on the need to assess a child's readiness for school at Kindergarten entry, in order to improve instruction; this mirrors the goal of the ITDS workgroup to provide information that will help caregivers better support the development of infants and toddlers; 2) in the FY11 Federal Budget Resolution, the Race to the Top initiative now includes early learning as one of five required priorities for states applying for these funds. There is little clarity at the moment about process, but the funds have the potential of supporting the development and implementation of the infant-toddler guidelines.

II: Review and Approval of Notes from Second Meeting
   Handouts: *Draft Minutes from 12.21.10 Meeting*
          Illinois Stakeholder Interview Summary Report

Minutes were approved as drafted. Motion made by Theresa Hawley, seconded by Lindsey Cochrane. Approved unanimously.

Illinois Stakeholder Interview Summary Report – overview of themes and comments as reported at 12.21.10 Work Group meeting, with a few additional comments from interviews conducted following the December meeting. Several themes were echoed throughout the interviews as critical to consider: alignment with existing standards; child-focused, family-centric; caregiver-parent relationships; sensitivity to cultural and individual differences. The interviews also clarified our understanding of the infant-toddler services and systems in place and what we need to pay attention to as we develop I/T guidelines.

III: Visioning Document Revisions
    Handout: Draft Visioning Document

Revisions reflect comments and discussion of Work Group members at the December meeting. This is a working document, reflecting a shared vision of the purpose of the project as well as major themes and principles that will guide the work. The document will be revisited as the project progresses.

IV: Update on Other State Interviews
Susan reviewed the process she and Sam followed in reviewing early learning guidelines of 25 other states in order to identify key aspects as well as a small number of states to interview for more in-depth information. State documents were analyzed for: 1) their process of developing the guidelines; 2) content; and 3) implementation process, all based on criteria agreed upon by the Work Group. Information on each state's guidelines was compiled on the criteria matrix (hard copies available around the room and sent via email prior to meeting), with points that match our criteria highlighted. Five states were selected for the first round of interviews based on this analysis, reflecting various aspects important to the group: Kentucky, Maine, Nebraska, North Carolina, and Washington State.

In addition to the key questions we will be discussing, two themes stood out: 1) training - states emphasized the importance of providing training on the ELGs as soon as they are released, helping to avoid misuse down the line (see Nebraska's training outline); 2) feedback/buy-in during the development process – various methods were used including statewide conferences, forums, focus groups; review of drafts by specialists in specific areas, state and national experts; publishing draft on-line for broader input and comment.

V: Key Questions for Development of Illinois Document
    Handouts: Example documents from other states

Sam reviewed the example documents from the five states selected for interviews. Documents include: part of each state's introduction to their guidelines; an example of the social-emotional domain or age group that includes this domain (Maine) and/or examples of companion documents.

a. Document structure: A*ge Groups within Domains/Domains within Age Groups*
Overview:
- All but two of the 25 states organized the ELGs by age groupings within each of the identified domains. Reasons included:
    - Enables user to see the developmental progression within a specific domain across the entire age range addressed (B-3 or B-5)
    - Based on existing frameworks used in a state (e.g., ECCS, Kids Matter) or pre-K standards
    - Even within this structure, almost every state stated at one point or another that while domains were addressed separately, they are interrelated, given that every child's development occurs across domains simultaneously.
- Maine is one of two states reviewed whose ELGs are organized by domains within three age groupings. This structure helps to emphasize the interrelatedness of domains within each developmental age.

Discussion: Key concern of work group members was the ability of the ELGs to reflect the flexibility of development across the birth to three age span, given that development occurs at different rates for

different children; it would be important that the document talk about this developmental progression. It was the sense of the group that this would be easier to reflect if the document was organized by age groupings *within domains*. Creative Curriculum is organized by domains, as is Early Head Start. The group liked the idea of overlapping age groupings (as in North Carolina) – ITERS has overlapping age ranges; and was intrigued by California's document that separates out the newborn period birth to 4 months, since birth to 8 or 12 months is a very broad developmental range. Some states show the progression within age groupings by gradations of color. It was cautioned however that Creative Curriculum is color-coded so using colors to distinguish age groupings or domains for the ELGs might be confusing.   Washington's format is easy to follow and shows developmental progression at a glance. There was agreement that age groupings should not be too narrow.

b. Target Audience and Companion Documents
Overview – Target Audience:
- Each state interviewed noted the need and importance of identifying the target audience at the very beginning of the process, as the identified audience dictates the level and complexity of language, and amount of information provided
- Most states target providers, some clearly written for early childhood professionals, others in more simple language that could be appropriate for less trained providers and/or parents. This is reflected in the introduction as well as the format of the document.
- A number of states ended up creating separate, more accessible documents geared toward parents or providers with less training, often in response to feedback and specific requests.
- Some documents, while written for providers, are "family-friendly" by using general terminology (adult or adult caregiver) or providing examples set in homes as well as in group settings. (North Carolina is an example)
- Washington: used as a "source document", comprehensive document that has other companion documents attached.

Overview – companion documents
- Kentucky: *Parent Guide* – more user-friendly version, developed 2 years after KELS, used by providers as well as parents; *Field Guide* – supplement to KELS for child care providers, includes caregiver strategies (not included in KELS), written last year, at request of providers; *Parent Guide Tip Sheet* – tips for providers on how to use the Parent Guide with parents
- Washington State: *An Introduction for Parents to the Benchmarks, An Introduction to the Benchmarks for Early Care and Education Providers, An Introduction to the Benchmarks forTrainers of Early Care and Education Professionals* – a train the trainer guide developed 6 months after the Benchmarks; in addition, a training curriculum for I/T providers was developed last year (5 years after publication of Benchmarks)
- Maine: *Watch Me Grow* – a companion piece for parents in the form of a baby book, with space for memories and artifacts of growing baby; written one year after ELGs

Discussion:
Sense of the group: liked the idea of the ELGs serving as a source document (Washington), developing companion pieces from this document, since we won't necessarily know at the beginning what companion pieces will be needed; at his point, seems like it would be important to have a companion piece geared toward parents , and a piece on how trainers could use the document; it might also be good to have a piece on how caregivers could use the documents with parents (Kentucky's *Parent Guide Tip Sheet*).

A question was raised on how states use their ELG document – some examples include: required at higher levels of the QRS; part of credentialing and professional development systems; in higher education classes. Karen stressed the need to be intentional about this, with a focus on adding value to any system without burdens.

c. Inclusion of Cultural and Special Population Diversity
Overview:
- Most states address diversity and individual differences in their Guiding Principles
- A number of states define special populations very broadly to include, but not limited to, delays, disabilities, culture, class, language, gender, race, regional variations
- Maine, Washington, North Carolina: include examples of diversity and special populations in their examples of child behaviors and caregiver strategies
- Maine:
    - in introduction, has section on "universal designed settings" – accessible products and environments;
    - each age grouping includes a section on "Responding to Individual Differences" which addresses disabilities, cultural differences, and temperament, and alerts caregivers to "early warning signs" of possible developmental concerns
    - their focus on diversity influenced by a training curriculum that had been developed for the state on responding to cultural differences, as well as having an early intervention specialist as part of the writing group for the ELGs
- Washington:
    - Bias and Fairness work group, including a multi-cultural early childhood expert, reviewed first draft, and made numerous suggestions/changes
    - Overall Introduction to benchmarks has section on "Valuing Diversity"; introduction to each domain has section on "Supporting Individual Differences and Diversity"
- North Carolina
    - Had state and national experts on cultural diversity, social-emotional development, disabilities review the draft
    - Uses "real world stories" to include examples of cultural and individual differences
- Nebraska:
    - Includes "Strategies to Support Inclusive Learning Environments" in introduction to each domain

Discussion:
Sense of the group: liked North Carolina's *What to Look For* and *Real World Stories* sections – language is accessible to providers without a strong early childhood background; Real World Stories provide an opportunity to highlight different settings and systems; avoids the use of the term "caregiver," which can be limiting; Maine's C*aregivers Support By* also a way to reflect different settings.

General comments:
- Need one version of the document that is not very long;
- California and Ohio/South Carolina documents reflect PITC approach; this would dovetail with Illinois' plan to use PITC training

VI: Wrap-Up and Next Steps
- Sam and Susan will continue to review pieces of other states' documents. California will be next on the list – while their document is focused on center-based child care, it has some important aspects

to learn more about, including their separate newborn age group (birth t0 4 months), and their use of PITC.

- Explore use of web-x for next meeting, for those participating by phone or video conferencing.

There seemed to be the following areas of consensus during the meeting:
- **The document should be formatted by domains, with age brackets fitting under the domains.**
- **Age brackets should be overlapping to communicate flexibility within the developmental trajectory.**
- **A special "newborn" section should be separate from the age brackets within the domains, to mark the unique interrelatedness within the domains.**